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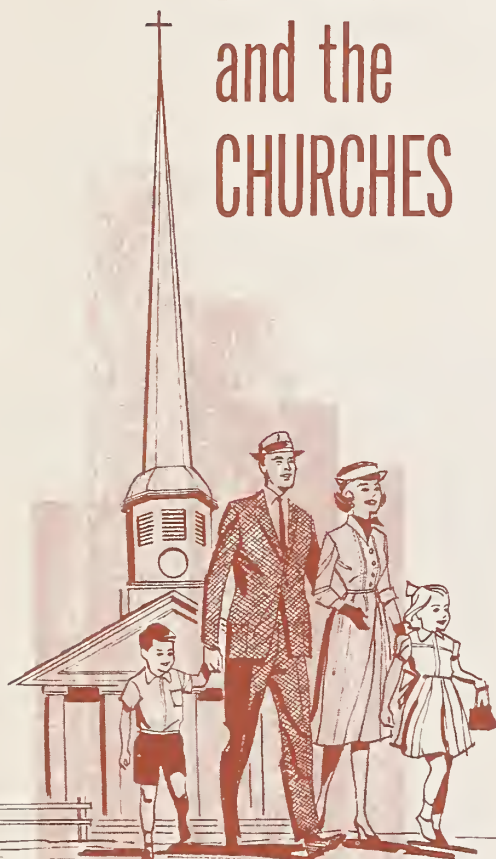
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# RURAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT and the CHURCHES



## What Church Leaders Say About RAD

Rural Areas Development offers an opportunity for American people to act responsibly on behalf of others.

### AN EVALUATION OF RAD:

- It recognizes the human and natural resources in rural areas.
- It encourages people in rural areas to take the initiative to discover and develop their creative ability and natural resources.
- It provides help for people in rural areas to develop enterprises which can serve the needs of other people.
- It recognizes the dignity of work.
- It allows people to decide some basic issues of life without severe economic pressure; for example, where they want to live and what they want to do.
- In general it enables benefits to accrue to all of the people in the participating counties.
- It recognizes the needs of all the people in the low-income rural areas (social welfare cases; widows, widowers, older orphans, handicapped people; and people without sufficient education).

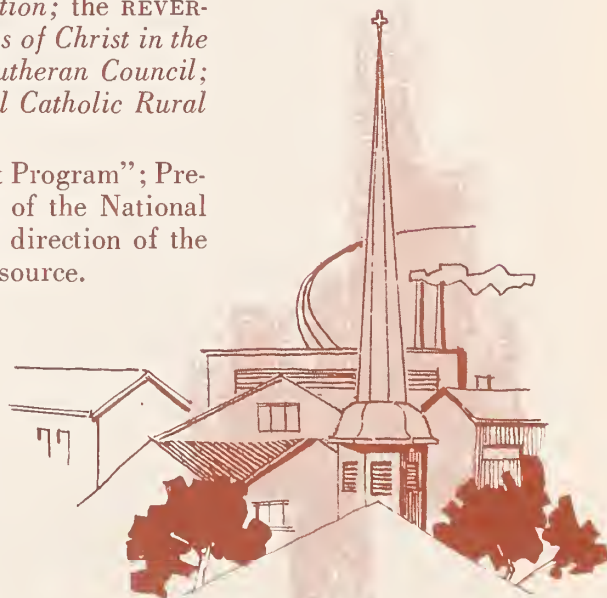
by Church Leaders (see below)

## Acknowledgment

The Department of Agriculture is indebted to the following church leaders for their help in preparing this pamphlet: They are the REVEREND M. WENDELL BELEW, *Southern Baptist Convention*; the REVEREND HENRY McCANNA, *the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA*; the REVEREND E. W. MUELLER, *the National Lutheran Council*; and the REVEREND E. W. O'ROURKE, D.D., *the National Catholic Rural Life Conference*.

A pamphlet "The Church and the Rural Development Program"; Prepared in 1959 by the Town and Country Department of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, under the direction of the REVEREND RICHARD O. COMFORT, was a very helpful source.

A successful program for the development of rural areas depends upon the participation of many institutions and organizations that serve the community. Religious institutions are among those which can make a significant contribution to this effort. This pamphlet is intended to assist in obtaining better understanding of the role which they can play. The approach, however, is applicable to the many other institutions serving the community.







## Rural Areas Development and the Churches

**D**ESPITE AMERICA's general wealth and heritage of opportunity, in many parts of the Nation there is low income and underemployment. Rural poverty is sometimes caused by inadequate and inefficient use of resources. It can also result from a lack of skills, education, special training, and leadership ability.

Poverty creates inadequate schools, poor roads, erosion of social and community life, and economic retardation. As low income persists it tends to depress income levels in other parts of the country.

The solutions to this problem of poverty involve much more than efficient farming. There is a need to develop supplemental jobs in rural areas and to provide training opportunities to those who must find employment off the farm. In fact, the program that will work best is one that attacks many problems at the same time. Rural economic stagnation is deep seated and affects all community facilities, resources, and attitudes.

### The RAD Effort

A broadened and revitalized rural areas development effort has now been launched to help solve these problems. Its goals are:

*To create a new climate of hope and progress in each area; to abolish rural poverty; to help bring agriculture, industry, recreation, forestry, and other possibilities into the most productive balance.*

Here is an excellent vehicle for cooperative effort and concerted action. The success of the program rests upon private initiative and effort—interested, enthusiastic, and informed participants.

#### LOCAL INITIATIVE

Rural areas development depends upon local leadership. People on farms and in small towns evolve a program to help their community. As they develop proposals, they can call upon the resources of the Department of Agriculture, the State, and any other source for assistance in solving problems.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will provide needed technical services to State and local agencies and groups. However, the initiative for

formulating and operating successful programs of rural areas development must come from the locality, and the drive to keep up the program must be the responsibility of local people.

#### ARA PROVIDES HELP

The Area Redevelopment Act, administered by the Area Redevelopment Administration of the Department of Commerce, is a helpful tool in rural economic improvement. This law authorizes Federal loans and grants, technical aid, and retraining in designated urban and rural areas.

ARA services include industrial and commercial loans in designated rural areas, as well as loans and grants for community facilities such as water and sewer systems. ARA also provides funds for retraining people as factory workers, electricians, tractor drivers and tractor maintenance workers, and for other kinds of jobs.

Among USDA's assignments under the Area Redevelopment Act are: Selection of rural areas to receive assistance; the review of rural area plans for development; and, most important, helping local leaders put together plans and projects that will make full use of the new credit and technical assistance programs provided by ARA.



## The Role of the Churches

Many churches are cooperating in rural areas development. They have a distinct and unique contribution. Church leaders share information, provide hope, and encourage enough self-confidence to help people act individually and collectively to solve some of their economic problems.

Historically the church has stressed the importance of each individual and has undertaken constructive efforts to help each person develop and use his capabilities fully.

Church leaders—pastors and laymen—are deeply concerned over low income, underemployment, and the crippling effects of poverty on human personality. These concerns and the national interest call for programs which will enlarge opportunities for adequate incomes and satisfactory levels of living, either on or off the farm, as the sound basis for wholesome growth.

Churches in America are rooted not only in ethical problems, but in social problems as well. They have a natural interest in rural areas development.

When the role of the church is understood, the church has no difficulty in relating itself to agencies and institutions of society which help needy people and develop human and natural resources.

## What the Church Can Do

Here are some of the ways churches, through lay leaders and pastors, can assist:

### • *DEVELOP A CONSTRUCTIVE ATTITUDE*

Basic to the success of RAD is a constructive attitude on the part of the individual citizen in the local community. The churches in town and country are in a strategic position to develop this attitude. Here lies one of their potential major contributions.

### • *WORK THROUGH COMMITTEES*

Lay leaders and pastors can help organize and serve on county, area, and State Rural Areas Development committees.

The Extension Service has the responsibility for providing educational leadership to rural areas development committees in counties, areas, and States. These committees are made up of local leaders and include representatives from: Farmer cooperatives, farm organizations, church groups, civic organizations, labor, business and industry, education, health, and economic development agencies.

### • *PROVIDE LEADERSHIP*

Church leaders can teach courses, conduct leadership schools, help make surveys, and conduct tours to develop an awakened people, better prepared to carry out leadership roles in specific activities.

### • *WORK WITH YOUTH GROUPS*

In working with 4-H Clubs, Boy and Girl Scouts, FFA groups, and other youth groups, pastors can encourage the young people to include a wider coverage in their existing programs or help start new groups to better meet the needs of young people who have been neglected in the past.

### • *WORK OF PASTORS*

Pastors can discuss the relation of church and RAD with their lay leaders and encourage them to participate in it as an opportunity to share responsibility in community development.

### • *CRITICIZE CONSTRUCTIVELY*

By providing constructive criticism as it develops, the church can make a significant contribution.

### • *STUDY NEW PROBLEMS*

Rural Areas Development may bring new issues and changing values. Laymen and pastors can help bring understanding and guide people through the changes the community is experiencing.

### • *COMMUNICATE*

The church can use its media of communication in many ways to assist in rural areas development.

## References

*A Study of Low Income Farm Families in Two Southern Rural Communities*, Bureau of Research and Survey for the Department of Town and Country Church, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, 475 Riverside Drive, New York 27, N.Y.

*Developing Rural Industry*, National Catholic Rural Life Conference, 3801 Grand Avenue, Des Moines 12, Iowa.

*Industrial Development Handbook*. Same as above.  
*Social Change and Christian Responsibility in Town and Country*, National Lutheran Council, Church in Town and Country, 327 South LaSalle Street, Chicago, Ill.

*Pamphlets on the Rural Church in the Community*, Department of Associational Missions, Southern Baptist Convention, 161 Spring Street, NW., Atlanta 3, Ga.

*Can Rural Areas Development Help Your Community*, PA-478 (guidelines to organization and structure of the RAD committee and where to get help).

Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D.C.

*Forests in Rural Areas Development*, PA-494 (program suggestion). Same as above.

*Revitalizing America Today*, PA-497 (purpose and concept of the program). Same as above.

*Pegs for Rural Progress*, Agriculture Handbook 229 (handbook for rural areas development). Same as above.

Other publications are available from the following Government agencies:

OFFICE OF RURAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D.C.

EXTENSION SERVICE, State Land-Grant Colleges.

Publications are issued on Rural Areas Development by most Land-Grant Colleges.

OFFICE OF INFORMATION, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D.C.

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